

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner's allowance of claims 37-39 and the Examiner's indication of the allowability of the subject matter of claims 30, 35 and 36 are respectfully acknowledged.

Claim 30 has been amended to be rewritten in independent form, to include all of the limitations of its parent claim 19. No new matter has been added, and no new issues with respect to patentability have been raised. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claim 30 be approved and entered, and it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 30 is also in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 35 and 36, however, have not been rewritten in independent form at this time since, as set forth in detail hereinbelow, it is respectfully submitted that their parent claim 34, as amended, also recites allowable subject matter.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 18 and 34 have been amended to recite that the second sound absorbing member is formed by filling a sound absorbing material in at least one space defined by the ribs (and closed by

the outer metal plate - claim 34) at the second side of the foundation body panel. See, generally, element 20 in the specification and drawings, and see also the disclosure in the specification at, for example, the last line of page 20, page 22, line 3, page 26, lines 13-15.

In addition, claims 34 and 35 have also been amended to correct the informalities pointed out by the Examiner in item 2 on page 2 of the Office Action.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 18, 26 and 34 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of USP 5,744,763 ("Iwasa et al") and USP 5,472,760 ("Norvell"); claims 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Iwasa et al and JP 63-188544 ("Tokunaga et al"); claims 21-23 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Iwasa et al and USP 5,595,415 ("Beaulat"); and claim 27 was rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Iwasa et al, Norvell, and "obvious common knowledge." These rejections, however, are

respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

According to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 18, the interior member comprises a second sound absorbing member formed by filling a sound absorbing material in at least one said space defined by the ribs at the second side of the foundation body panel. In addition, according to amended independent claim 34, the interior member of the wall member comprises a second sound absorbing member formed by filling a sound absorbing material in at least one said space defined by the ribs and closed by the outer metal plate at the second side of the foundation body. With this structure, the sound absorbing effect of the interior member can be further enhanced.

As recognized by the Examiner, Iwasa et al does not disclose a second sound absorbing member in the manner recited in claims 18 and 34 (page 4, lines 4-6 of the Office Action).

For this reason, the Examiner has cited Norvell to supply the missing teaching of Iwasa et al. According to the Examiner, Norvell discloses "two sound absorbing members (50, 52) separated by a foundation body panel (54)" (Office Action page 4, lines 7 and 8).

It is respectfully submitted, however, that even if the combination suggested by the Examiner were considered to be reasonable, Iwasa et al and Novell do not fairly suggest filling

a space (defined by the ribs at the second side of the foundation body panel) with a sound absorbing material as recited in amended independent claims 18 and 34.

Indeed, according to Iwasa et al, elements 51 (interpreted by the Examiner as the at least one space defined by the ribs as recited in claims 18 and 34) in the structure of Fig. 15 are intentionally provided as air pockets to "increase overall acoustic absorptivity" even if the thickness of the layer 11 is reduced, such that "the entire weight of the soundproofing material 90 can be reduced" (column 11, lines 46-51).

It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that even if the Examiner's interpretation of Norvell as disclosing a second sound absorbing member were considered to be reasonable, the teachings of Norvell would not suggest filling the intentionally-provided air pockets 51 of Iwasa et al with a sound absorbing material. In fact, according to Iwasa et al, the air pockets are provided to enable sufficient sound reduction even if the amount of material provided for sound absorbing (rubber 11) is reduced.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Iwasa et al and Novell do not fairly suggest filling a space (defined by the ribs at the second side of the foundation body panel) with a sound absorbing material as recited in amended independent claims 18 and 34. And it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 18 and 34, and all of the claims respectively

depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over Iwasa et al and Norvell under 35 USC 103.

With respect to independent claims 21 and 22, the Examiner acknowledges on page 6 of the Office Action that Iwasa et al does not disclose that "the foundation body panel comprises a portion for attaching an electrical wire member channel at the second side of the foundation body panel" (claim 21) or that "the foundation body panel comprises a portion for forming an air conditioning duct at the second side of the foundation body panel" (claim 22). For this reason, the Examiner has cited Beaulat to supply the missing teachings of Iwasa et al.

As recognized by the Examiner, Beaulat discloses a volume 4 as a ventilation duct and a volume 5 for electrical cables. However, according to Beaulat, the volumes 4 and 5 are provided between a first panel 3a, which is a foam panel, and a second panel 3b, which is a foam shell. By contrast, element 91 of Iwasa et al, which the Examiner asserts corresponds to the foundation body panel of the present invention, is merely a felt layer (as recognized by the Examiner).

It is respectfully submitted that the disclosure of providing volumes for ventilation and electrical cables between a foam panel and a foam shell (as according to Beaulat) does not suggest providing a portion of a felt layer (as according to Iwasa et al) as a portion for attaching an electrical wire member

channel, or providing a portion of a felt layer (as according to Iwasa et al) as a portion for forming an air conditioning duct.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that it would not have been obvious to apply the technique disclosed by Beaulat to the structure disclosed by Iwasa et al as suggested by the Examiner to achieve the structure recited in claims 21 and 22 whereby "the foundation body panel comprises a portion for attaching an electrical wire member channel at the second side of the foundation body panel" (claim 21) and "the foundation body panel comprises a portion for forming an air conditioning duct at the second side of the foundation body panel" (claim 22).

And it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 21 and 22, and claim 23 depending from claim 22, patentably distinguish over Iwasa et al and Beaulat under 35 USC 103.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended independent claims 18 and 34, independent claims 21 and 22, and all of the claims respectively depending therefrom, clearly patentably distinguish over the cited references under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

/Douglas Holtz/

Douglas Holtz
Reg. No. 33,902

Frishauf, Holtz, Goodman & Chick, P.C.
220 Fifth Avenue - 16th Floor
New York, New York 10001-7708
Tel. No. (212) 319-4900
Fax No. (212) 319-5101

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